Medical Student Coaching by Retired Physicians: A KUSM-W Case Study (Student Results)

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Background

- In 2019, KUSM-W began utilizing retired physicians as coaches for third year medical students
- Skarupski et al. (2020) surveyed fourteen medical schools and reported that late-career faculty expressed interest in ongoing teaching or education post-retirement
- While the literature demonstrates that interest in ongoing involvement is common among retirees, few reports highlight actual examples of successful ways medical schools have utilized retirees

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to describe how retired physicians were integrated into the role of coaches for 3rd year medical students at KUSM-W and to describe the experiences of key stakeholders that resulted from that integration. Research questions include:
1. How do students and coaches describe coaching in the third year of medical school?
2. From the perspectives of students and staff, what were the benefits and challenges of utilizing retired physicians in this role?

Methods

- This is a case study, designed following the guidelines set forth by Merriam (1998)
- Data obtained through qualitative interviews
- Participants: n = 9 students from 5 retired coaches
- Data analysis: deductive coding using definitions of mentoring, coaching, and advising from the American Medical Association Coaching Handbook (2017)

Findings

1. 7/9 found coaching at least somewhat valuable
2. Yes = coaching + mentoring

Theme 1: Hesitancy about new coach in 3rd year

“Purpose of coaching? “I don’t know.”
“hesitant”
“an avalanche”
“nerve-racking”

Theme 2: Insight of retired physicians

“It was cool to just talk to a physician, a mentor really, and an attending who is just kind of there at a personal level...this is a nice, genuine (person) I probably learned a lot from.”

Theme 3: “Cool” to connect on a personal level

Theme 4: Time

“Having a retired physician versus somebody who is 10 years younger, I’m not sure if I would have been able to tell the difference.”

Theme 5: Concerns are not about working with a retired physician as a coach

Discussion

- Retired physicians were received well by students as coaches
- A lot of confusion about the goal or purpose of coaching
- Challenge: coaches were not well attuned to the residency application process
- Suggestions from students: match by specialty; improve 2nd to 3rd year transition between coaches; explain what coaching is and set expectations; increase contact, not meetings; give coaches resources they can give students

References